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NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN POLE PRODUCTION INCREASED IN 1959

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Production of commercial poles in the northern Rocky Mountain area^{1/} reached a total of 428,581 poles in 1959, an output 26 percent higher than that of 1958. Production gains were made in all the principal pole species except Douglas-fir and in all source areas except southern Idaho. This improved production rate reflects the pole industry's recovery, along with other timber-based industries, from the slump caused by the general business recession of 1957-58.

Table 1.--Poles produced in Montana, Idaho, and northeastern Washington,
by species, 1959

Species	Montana	Idaho	Northeastern Washington	Total	Percent of total
Western redcedar	1,693	108,726	0	29,991	140,410 33
Lodgepole pine	237,293	0	6,722	0	244,015 57
Western larch	14,918	19,952	0	7,926	42,796 10
Douglas-fir	1,360	0	0	0	1,360 (1/)
Total	255,264	128,678	6,722	37,917	428,581
Percent	59	30	2	9	100

1/ Less than 0.5 percent.

1/ The annual survey of commercial pole output in Montana, northern Idaho, and northeastern Washington is sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Pole and Treating Association, Spokane, Washington. The Association contacts all pole companies known to be operating in this area, and the Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station compiles the data furnished by the pole companies. Additional contacts are made in southern Idaho by the Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station to make the report complete for all of Idaho. This report is based on reports from 90 percent of the companies contacted; pole production not accounted for is estimated to be less than 1 percent of the total.

Lodgepole pine poles, practically all from Montana, comprised well over half of the total output for 1959. Stepped-up construction programs for rural power and telephone lines that started about the middle of 1958, as well as increasing use of small poles for constructing storage buildings, helped to put lodgepole pine in numerical lead of the four principal species. The earlier increased demand for small rural power and telephone lines tapered off materially about the middle of 1959 and did not continue throughout the year. Montana's top position among the source areas of the region was mainly due to pole production from lodgepole pine.

Table 2.--Pole production in Montana, Idaho,^{1/} and northeastern Washington
by species, 1947-1959

Year	S p e c i e s					Total
	: Western	: Lodgepole	: Western	: Douglas-	: Other ^{2/}	
	: redcedar	: pine	: larch	: fir	:	
	- - - - - Number - - - - -					
1947	230,872	351,310	221,990	6,473	6,557	817,202
1948	212,785	138,099	90,879	5,419	804	447,986
1949	286,116	186,262	121,214	5,720	0	599,312
1950	217,049	92,338	71,651	9,070	0	390,108
1951	192,271	136,628	126,332	10,116	0	465,347
1952	217,721	104,621	152,761	19,049	0	494,152
1953	191,551	128,523	90,245	3,516	0	413,835
1954	138,624	101,842	36,938	768	0	278,172
1955	131,860	95,027	61,688	5,941	0	294,516
1956	193,393	236,655	111,268	36,334	0	577,650
1957	280,764	142,361	82,209	13,559	0	518,893
1958	127,039	173,331	37,152	2,709	0	340,231
1959	140,410	244,015	42,796	1,360	0	428,581
Average, 1947-1956	201,224	157,130	108,497	10,241	736	477,828
Percent change, 1959 from 1958	+11	+41	+15	-50	0	+26

^{1/} Only northern Idaho is included in data for 1956 and preceding years; data since 1957 include all of Idaho.

^{2/} Mainly ponderosa pine.

In numerical gains over 1958 production, the highly regarded western redcedar was second only to lodgepole pine and was followed by western larch. Douglas-fir production has declined each year since 1956, when 36,334 poles of this species were made, to reach the second lowest point on record.

Table 3.--Pole production in Montana, Idaho, and northeastern Washington, and imported poles, by sources, 1947-1959

Year	Poles grown and cut in				Poles imported from	
	Idaho		Northeastern:		Canada	West coast
	Montana:	Northern	Southern	Washington		
	Number					
1947	324,734	316,764	--	175,704	311,894	44,749
1948	166,856	205,035	--	76,095	187,975	39,094
1949	221,815	300,808	--	76,689	270,995	40,296
1950	148,473	180,410	--	61,225	213,371	12,788
1951	216,188	193,341	--	55,818	110,081	22,885
1952	181,985	223,777	6,000	88,390	357,449	22,237
1953	177,130	206,915	--	29,790	1/ 262,017	
1954	137,531	131,110	--	9,531	220,244	8,875
1955	138,260	131,281	--	24,975	77,017	54
1956	303,635	201,159	10,292	72,856	124,916	653
1957	177,979	242,946	9,995	87,973	181,584	0
1958	181,627	124,648	7,406	26,550	120,170	6,801
1959	255,264	128,678	6,722	37,917	98,034	1,787
Average						
1947-1956	201,661	209,060	2/ 8,146	67,107	232,759	
Percent change						
1959 from 1958	+41	+3	-9	+43	-18	-74

1/ Imports from Canada and west coast not separable for 1953.

2/ Average of years 1952 and 1956 only.

The most substantial numerical and percentage gains among the pole producing sections of the northern Rocky Mountain area were made in Montana and northeastern Washington. Production more than 40 percent above the 1958 output was recorded in both these areas. Although northern Idaho gained 3 percent over its 1958 output, the actual number of poles was only about 4,000 more. Southern Idaho's output, which has seldom exceeded 10,000 poles in any year, has declined each year since its 1956 high point.

Imported poles from Canada and the west coast normally make up a substantial part of the poles handled by northern Rocky Mountain poleyards; but in 1959 imports from these two areas were 18 and 74 percent, respectively, below their 1958 level. With about 98,000 poles in 1959, imports from Canada were markedly below their most recent peak of nearly 182,000, reached in 1957.

Normally a considerable number of poles is shipped directly from the northern Rocky Mountain area to outside yards without local processing. In 1957, more than 38,000 poles were handled in this manner, and in 1958 nearly 32,000 poles were shipped out directly. However, in 1959 only 7,183 poles were shipped directly to Lake States and Colorado yards.

The production data in this report furnish several evidences of growing capacity and stability in the pole industry of the northern Rocky Mountains. This improved status is indicated by (1) rising over-all output, (2) declining imports from outside sources, (3) greatly reduced direct shipments to outside processing plants, and (4) new markets for small poles.

Table 4.--Distribution of 1959 pole production in Montana, Idaho, and northeastern Washington by species, length, and A.S.A. class

Pole : A. S. A. C l a s s											
length:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	All
Feet	P e r c e n t o f t o t a l										
<u>WESTERN REDCEDAR</u>											
25	0.2	0.2	1.0	1.2	2.4	4.5	2.7	2.4	3.6	0.3	18.5
30	.2	.3	.6	1.1	2.3	3.7	3.2	.4	.3	<u>1/</u> 0	12.1
35	.2	.4	1.2	4.8	7.7	7.3	4.3	<u>2/</u> --	--	0	25.9
40	.2	.8	2.6	6.8	4.4	1.6	--	0	0	0	16.4
45	.3	1.4	3.1	4.2	1.8	.1	0	0	0	0	10.9
50	.5	1.4	2.2	2.0	.1	0	0	0	0	0	6.2
55	1.7	3.5	3.6	1.2	--	0	0	0	0	0	10.0
All	3.3	8.0	14.3	21.3	18.7	17.2	10.2	2.8	3.9	.3	100.0
<u>LODGEPOLE PINE</u>											
25	--	--	.1	.3	.9	3.5	7.8	.8	20.6	30.3	64.3
30	--	--	--	.1	.6	1.4	3.6	.4	9.4	5.5	21.1
35	0	--	.1	.5	2.3	4.3	3.2	.5	0	0	10.9
40	--	--	.2	.7	1.4	.5	0	0	0	0	2.8
45	--	--	.2	.3	.2	.1	0	0	0	0	.8
50	--	--	.1	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	.1
55	0	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	--
All	--	.1	.7	1.9	5.4	9.8	14.6	1.7	30.0	35.8	100.0
<u>WESTERN LARCH</u>											
25	.3	.5	.8	.7	2.2	4.5	3.5	.5	2.2	.4	15.6
30	.6	.6	.5	.4	3.4	3.6	3.1	.2	.6	.2	13.2
35	.7	.1	.7	2.2	7.4	7.9	3.6	0	.4	--	23.0
40	1.4	.4	1.9	12.3	4.2	1.9	.5	0	0	0	22.6
45	.8	.4	1.5	3.5	2.2	.5	0	0	0	0	8.9
50	1.3	1.2	2.4	1.6	.3	.1	0	0	0	0	6.9
55	2.2	3.3	4.1	.2	--	0	0	0	0	0	9.8
All	7.3	6.5	11.9	20.9	19.7	18.5	10.7	.7	3.2	.6	100.0
<u>DOUGLAS-FIR</u>											
25	0	0	0	0	0	.1	0	0	0	0	.1
30	0	0	0	0	.1	7.5	4.0	0	0	0	11.6
35	.1	.1	3.3	4.6	10.2	6.3	.5	0	0	0	25.1
40	1.2	3.0	7.2	14.1	12.1	.8	0	0	0	0	38.4
45	.1	.1	.2	.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.5
50	.1	.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.2
55	2.1	9.8	12.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24.1
All	3.6	13.1	22.9	18.8	22.4	14.7	4.5	0	0	0	100.0
<u>ALL SPECIES</u>											
25	.1	.1	.5	.6	1.5	3.9	5.7	1.3	13.0	17.2	43.9
30	.1	.2	.3	.5	1.4	2.4	3.4	.4	5.5	3.1	17.3
35	.2	.2	.5	2.1	4.6	5.7	3.6	.3	--	0	17.2
40	.2	.3	1.2	3.9	2.8	1.0	--	0	0	0	9.4
45	.2	.5	1.3	1.9	.9	.1	0	0	0	0	4.9
50	.3	.6	1.0	.9	.1	--	0	0	0	0	2.9
55	.8	1.5	1.7	.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.4
All	1.9	3.4	6.5	10.3	11.3	13.1	12.7	2.0	18.5	20.3	100.0

1/ Zero (0) indicates no production.

2/ Dash (--) indicates less than 0.05 percent.